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Plumpy'Nut-Chiponde Alliance: US Funds New Lifesaving Peanut Butter Production in Malawi

The United States Government has awarded a US\$130,400 (MK 16.3 million) grant to support an alliance between Nutriset, a French for-profit company, and Project Peanut Butter, a new Malawian non-governmental organization (NGO). As a result of US funding, Plumpy'Nut-Chiponde, a life-saving peanut butter will be produced and used extensively throughout Malawi to save malnourished children from early death as well as for nutritional supplementation of adults and children infected with HIV who are receiving anti-retroviral (ARV) therapy. Plumpy'Nut looks like peanut butter and is made with ground nuts, milk powder, and micronutrients with a nutritional content similar to F-100 therapeutic milk. It has been used in the food emergencies in Niger and Sudan to save children's lives with amazing success rates.

Unlike therapeutic milk powders and traditional treatment, Plumpy'Nut does not require hospitalization or doctor's care. Because of this, Plumpy'Nut is a revolutionary development in the feeding of malnourished children and vulnerable adults. It can be distributed directly to mothers or caretakers who can then give it directly to their malnourished children at home. Milk powders must be administered in feeding centers and once a child is well enough, he returns home with his mother who is armed with milk powder to continue his recovery. Milk powder must be mixed with clean water which is not always available and milk can spoil. Plumpy'Nut, on the other hand, does not need to be diluted with water and can be stored for up to 24 months in Malawi's warm weather. Caring for malnourished children in their homes greatly reduces costs associated with feeding centers and frees up health workers to care for the most vulnerable populations.

The alliance between Nutriset and Project Peanut Butter is also supported by the Malawi Ministry of Health, the World Food Programme, and UNICEF. UNICEF and NGOs will also support the alliance by purchasing Plumpy'Nut-Chiponde for use with malnourished and HIV-infected populations.